



Chris Cullison, 9, draws an electronic bead at a video gallery. The boy's father says his son 'is not aggressive in any aspect.'

Post photo by John Makely

# MAKE MY PLAY

## Rice psychologist finds some video games boost hostility

By **BILL COULTER**  
Post Reporter

You'd think some kid stuck to a video game like gum to a shoe — locked in deadly *zap, bebop, bing, bong, bing* combat with an electronic enemy — would be venting a little of his hostility.

Not so, says Rice University psychologist Craig Anderson, who has found — surprisingly and contrary to popular belief — some games actually tend to increase rather than purge aggressive feelings.

The more aggressive type games — the kind where the players are shooting and being shot at — heighten feelings of hostility and anxiety, at least for a short time after being played, Anderson has concluded from a study of video game-playing Rice students.

"The inference is that these games might increase the probability of game players behaving aggressively outside the video arcade," Anderson said.

"I'm not talking about rape, pillaging and plundering immediately afterward. But it might be that kids who played a lot might be more likely to get into fights and things," he said.

For his study, Anderson took 60 students enrolled in an introductory psychology course and divided them into three equal groups.

Using Radio Shack games in a laboratory setting on campus, he had one group play an aggressive game, a second group play a less

aggressive game and the third group — the control group — play no game at all.

Then the groups filled out special questionnaires in which they checked off a series of adjectives they felt best described their feelings at the moment.

Those who had played the games — both highly aggressive and less aggressive — were judged to be more hostile than those who had not played at all. Those who had played the highly aggressive game also indicated considerably more anxiety immediately following the game, Anderson said.

"The impact for these highly aggressive games is not a positive one, it is a negative one," Anderson said. "Heightened hostility and anxiety are not emotions we try to induce in people," he said.

Robert Lloyd, president of Data East Inc., a video machine manufacturing company, and immediate past president of the American Amusement Machine Association, questioned the validity of Anderson's study.

Lloyd said a number of studies have reached varying conclusions on whether certain type games might have bad effects on people.

Some studies have found video games serve in positive ways by making it easier for children to enter into the fields of computers and high technology they will encounter as adults, Lloyd said.

Also the more aggressive

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